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IN THIS ISSUE:

SEPTEMBER RED MEAT PRODUCTION

CHICKENS AND EGGS

CATTLE ON FEED

CROP PRODUCTION

FARM LABOR

'December Ag Survey Announcement'

SEPTEMBER RED MEAT PRODUCTION

West Virginia - Commercial red meat production during September 2007 totaled 600,000 pounds. This was up 21 percent from September 2006 and up 19 percent from August 2007 production. Commercial red meat production is the carcass weight after slaughter including beef, veal, pork, and lamb and mutton. Individual commodity production is total live weight of commercial slaughter.

Commercial cattle slaughter totaled 901,000 pounds live weight, up 32 percent from September 2006. Cattle slaughter totaled 900 head, up 200 head from the previous year. The average live weight, at 974 pounds, was down 4 pounds from a year ago.

Commercial calf slaughter was not published to avoid disclosing individual operations.

Commercial hog slaughter totaled 223,000 pounds live weight, up 6 percent from last year. Hog slaughter totaled 900 head, the same as the previous year. The average live weight, at 249 pounds, was up 9 pounds from the previous year.

Commercial sheep and lamb slaughter totaled 7,000 pounds live weight, down 13 percent from last year. Slaughter totaled 100 head, the same as the previous year. The average live weight, at 101 pounds, was down 9 pounds from the previous year.

United States- Commercial red meat production for the United States totaled 3.86 billion pounds in September, down 2 percent from the 3.95 billion pounds produced in September 2006.

Beef production, at 2.09 billion pounds, was 3 percent below the previous year. Cattle slaughter totaled 2.67 million head, down 4 percent from September 2006. The average live weight was up 5 pounds from the previous year, at 1,290 pounds.

Veal production totaled 9.4 million pounds, 22 percent below September a year ago. Calf slaughter totaled 56,000 head, down 3 percent from September 2006. The average live weight was down 68 pounds from last year, at 283 pounds.

Pork production totaled 1.75 billion pounds, down slightly from the previous year. Hog kill totaled 8.77 million head, down 1 percent from September 2006. The average live weight was unchanged from the previous year, at 266 pounds.

Lamb and mutton production, at 13.6 million pounds, was down 5 percent from September 2006. Sheep slaughter totaled 210,600 head, 4 percent below last year. The average live weight was 129 pounds, unchanged from September a year ago.

January to September 2007 commercial red meat production was 35.7 billion pounds, up 1 percent from 2006. Accumulated beef production was up slightly from last year, veal was down 2 percent, pork was up 2 percent from last year, and lamb and mutton production was down 3 percent.

September 2006 contained 21 weekdays (including one holiday) and 5 Saturdays. September 2007 contained 20 weekdays (including one holiday) and 5 Saturdays.

CHICKENS AND EGGS

United States- Egg production totaled 7.37 billion during September 2007, down 1 percent from last year. Production included 6.27 billion table eggs and 1.10 billion hatching eggs, of which 1.03 billion

were broiler-type and 64 million were egg-type. The total number of layers during September 2007 averaged 340 million, down 1 percent from last year. **September egg production** per 100 layers was 2,169 eggs, up slightly from September 2006.

All layers in the U.S. on October 1, 2007 totaled 340 million, down 1 percent from last year. The 340 million layers consisted of 281 million layers producing table or market type eggs, 56.2 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.76 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on October 1, 2007, averaged 72.7 eggs per 100 layers, up 2 percent from October 1, 2006.

Egg-type chicks hatched during September 2007 totaled 35.3 million, down 4 percent from September 2006. Eggs in incubators totaled 33.4 million on October 1, 2007, up 2 percent from a year ago.

Domestic placements of **egg-type pullet chicks** for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 300 thousand during September 2007, up 15 percent from September 2006.

Broiler-type chicks hatched during September 2007 totaled 784 million, up 2 percent from September 2006. Eggs in incubators totaled 647 million on October 1, 2007, up 2 percent from a year earlier.

Leading breeders placed 7.33 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during September 2007, up 4 percent from September 2006.

CATTLE ON FEED

United States - Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States for feedlots with capacity of 1,000 or more head totaled 11.0 million head on October 1, 2007. The inventory was 4 percent below October 1, 2006 but 5 percent above October 1, 2005. The inventory included 6.83 million steers and steer calves, down 5 percent from the previous year. This group accounted for 62 percent of the total inventory. Heifers and heifer calves accounted for 4.07 million head, down 1 percent from 2006.

Placements in feedlots during September totaled 2.43 million, 9 percent above 2006 and 3 percent above 2005. Net placements were 2.37 million head. During September, placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds were 610,000, 600-699 pounds were 505,000, 700-799 pounds were 570,000, and 800 pounds and greater were 740,000.

Marketings of fed cattle during September totaled 1.71 million, 3 percent below 2006 and 6 percent below 2005. This is the second lowest fed cattle marketings for the month of September since the series began in 1996.

Other disappearance totaled 54,000 during September, 21 percent below 2006 and 5 percent below 2005.

CROP PRODUCTION

United States - Corn production is forecast at 13.2 billion bushels, down 1 percent from last month but 25 percent above 2006. Based on conditions as of November 1, yields are expected to average 153.0 bushels per acre, down 1.7 bushels from October but 3.9 bushels above last year. If realized, this yield would be the second highest on record, behind 2004. Production would be the largest on record as producers expect to harvest the most corn acres in over fifty years. Forecast yields are lower than last month across the northern and western Corn Belt and adjacent areas of the Great Plains where actual harvest results are revealing that the impact of the hot, dry conditions during pollination was worse than initially expected. Producers in the Ohio Valley, Tennessee Valley, and Mid-Atlantic States reported higher yields than last month.

Corn for grain area harvested and to be harvested for grain is forecast at 86.1 million acres, unchanged from October but up 22 percent from 2006. If realized, this would be the most corn acres harvested for grain since 1933.

The November 1 corn objective yield data indicate the highest number of ears per acre on record for the combined 10 objective yield States (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), surpassing the previous record set in 2004. Indicated ears per acre are higher than last year in all objective yield States, with record highs being set in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

Soybean production is forecast at 2.59 billion bushels, down slightly from the October forecast and down 19 percent from last year's record high. Based on November 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 41.3 bushels per acre, down 0.1 bushel from last month and down 1.4 bushels from last year. Compared with last month, yields are forecast higher in Indiana, Michigan, Texas, and most of the Mid-Atlantic region as producers are realizing higher yields than expected. In contrast, yield prospects decreased or were unchanged across the remainder of the Nation as harvest progressed.

Soybean growers expect to harvest 62.8 million acres, unchanged from last month but down 16 percent from 2006. Record high yields are forecast in Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Texas. The November objective yield indicated pod count for the combined seven major soybean producing States (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Ohio) is up slightly from last year's pod count. Compared with last year, November objective yield indicated pod counts are lower in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri, but higher in the remaining objective yield program States. If realized, pod counts from the November objective yield survey will be the highest on record in Nebraska, and the second highest on record in Iowa and Ohio.

FARM LABOR

United States - There were 1,122,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of October 7-13, 2007, up 3 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 806,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 316,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.33 per hour during the October 2007 reference week, up 37 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$9.62 per hour, up 36 cents from last October, while livestock workers earned \$9.98 per hour compared with \$9.42 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$9.72 per hour, was up 42 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 42.1 hours for hired workers during the survey week, up fractionally from a year ago.

The **largest increases** in the number of hired farm workers from last year occurred in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) regions. In the Southern Plains and Lake regions, considerably drier conditions compared with last year's reference week resulted in a stronger demand for hired workers. Warm, dry conditions in the Appalachian I region caused vegetables to mature rapidly, and cotton harvest in North Carolina was well ahead of last year's pace. These factors led to an increased

need for hired workers. In the Appalachian II region worker demand was higher due to increased sorghum harvest in Kentucky and increased cotton harvest in Tennessee compared with last year's pace.

The **largest decreases** in the number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Pacific (Oregon and Washington), California, Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah), Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), and Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi) regions. In the Pacific region, wetter conditions compared with last year's reference week caused some fieldwork delays and reduced the demand for hired workers. In California, worker numbers were down slightly from last year due to continued shortages caused by unsettled political issues on immigration. Some California grape growers have resorted to mechanical harvest methods because of the worker shortages. Persistent dryness in the Mountain II region delayed completion of small grain seeding. The lack of precipitation also caused pastures to deteriorate and led some livestock producers to reduce inventories. Therefore, fewer hired workers were needed. In the Northeast II region, lingering effects from the season-long drought caused production of corn and soybeans to be considerably below last year, lowering worker demand. Dry conditions in the Delta region slowed the progress of winter wheat seeding, decreasing the demand for hired workers.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Northeast II, Lake, Mountain II, Mountain III (Arizona and New Mexico), and Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri) regions. In the Northeast II, Mountain II, and Corn Belt II regions, the higher wages were due to a lower proportion of part time workers. Strong demand for skilled workers in the dairy industry pushed wages higher in the Mountain III region. In the Lake Region, the higher wages were due to the heavy demand for skilled fruit pickers and dairy workers.

The 2007 U.S. all hired worker annual average wage rate was \$10.21, up 3 percent from the 2006 annual average wage rate of \$9.87. The U.S. field worker annual average wage rate was \$9.40, up 34 cents from last year's annual average. The field and livestock worker combined annual average wage rate at the U.S. level was \$9.49, up 4 percent from last year's annual average wage rate of \$9.15.

DECEMBER SURVEY

A sample of West Virginia farmers will be part of the national survey of producers who will be contacted for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's annual December survey. This survey will be conducted from November 29 through December 13, by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service by contacting farmers by mail, telephone and personal interview. The purpose of this survey is to obtain information to make estimates for the 2007 crop year. Commodities targeted by this survey are corn, soybeans, and hay. Winter wheat seeding for the 2008 crop year, December 1 inventories of hogs, chickens and grain storage capacity are also collected.

We depend on the voluntary cooperation of the producers in our sample. A high response rate will ensure that West Virginia agriculture is fully and accurately represented in the regional and national picture. **As always, all individual information collected will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.** Results of the hog survey will be released December 27, 2007 and results from the crop survey will be released January 11, 2008.

**NEXT ISSUE:**

Red Meat Production
Chicken & Eggs
Turkey Hatchery
Poultry Slaughter
Milk Production
Crop Production

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